

EXHIBIT A

Rotaries take to golf courses

Improved cut and easy maintenance have helped rotary mowers gain wider acceptance on golf courses. Small rotaries can go where reel mowers fear to tread.

By Dave Buchanan, Jacobsen Division of Textron

Larry Della Bianca got an unexpected bonus when he took delivery of his new rough mower—his fairways improved.

Shortly after the new rotary mower came to Pine Valley Golf Club in Southington, Conn., where Della Bianca is superintendent, repeat customers began complimenting him on the great shape of the fairways. He hadn't

changed any of his fairway maintenance practices, so he was at a loss to explain their sudden improvement.

"Finally, I was up at the clubhouse, looking out at the first fairway," Della Bianca recalls. "One of my people had just mowed the rough (with the new mower) and then it dawned on me. Because of the fine cut and the grass standing up, it gave a striping effect that was so distinctive, the rough stood out from the fairway and made it look better. It was accenting the fairway."

The new mower that gave Della Bianca such a fine cut and distinctive striping wasn't a traditional reel mower. It was a rotary mower. At courses across the country, rotaries are gaining acceptance as good tools for certain applications.

The vacuum action rotary cutting decks create and the equipment's relatively light weight have helped make them more popular.

"The main reason I like using them is their ability to really stand the grass up as they cut," says Mike Sauls, superintendent at Butler National Golf Club, Oak Brook, Ill. "With cart traffic driving down the rough, we've had a tendency to have the grass lay down. The rotary makes the grass stand up for denser growth."

Pine Valley's Della Bianca now uses both a large dedicated rotary mower and two riding rotaries with front-mounted decks to cut his roughs. He had used a 7-gang mower for that job.

"Before, when conditions were wet, I could not get the cut I was looking for," he says. "Now, I can go out there when it's wet or when it's dry. In fact,

two of my 18 roughs are extremely wet, and the way the HR-15—that's the large rotary—floats over them, I can cut them when they're wet without tracking."

Maneuverability is another plus for rotary mowers. Although they aren't as productive as gang mowers due to the limited cutting deck size, riding mowers with rotary decks can run rings around obstacles and sneak into tight spots with ease.

"In roughs, we use gang mowers and rotaries," says David Denley, superintendent at Lochinvar Golf Club, Houston, Texas. "Our course has a lot of pine trees, and we use a tractor with a 72 inch deck to get close to and in between them without damaging the trees."

Crews use gangs and rotaries in combination to maintain the roughs at Delaire Country Club, part of a development community in Del Ray Beach, Fla. Superintendent Ray Hansen uses riding rotaries with rear-discharge decks to trim along property lines that separate the course from the homes built along it.

"In most cases, we can get right up to the edge of the property line with a gang mower," Hansen says. "When that's not possible, where there are trees, we use the rotaries and string trimmers. We mulch and spray around the trees to reduce the amount of work we have to do with trimmers. That way the rotaries can handle most of it."

Although most superintendents restrict rotary use solely to roughs, it's not unusual to find rotaries doing trim work around greens.

"I can mow the greens' banks (where



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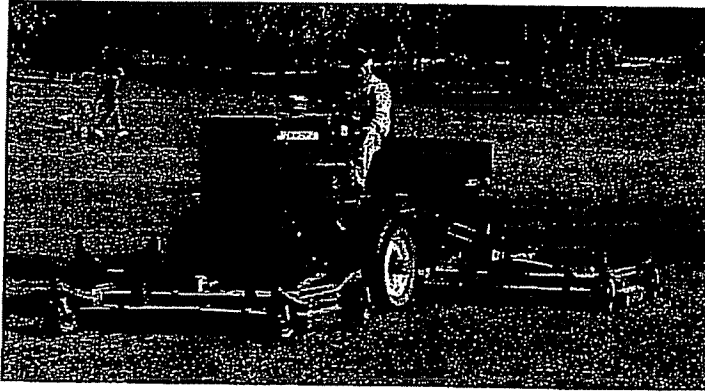
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Rotaries on golf courses

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Large, dedicated rotary mowers give maximum productivity. They are best for large areas with few obstacles

a rotary) three times a week and still stay within my mowing schedule," says Don Cook, superintendent at Milburn Country Club in Overland Park, Kan. "And I can cut my grass a little higher because we're cutting it so often. It looks neat and the grass is healthier because we're cutting it at 2½ or 3 inches instead of something shorter with a reel mower."

Selecting a rotary

A variety of rotaries can be useful on a golf course. Selecting the right one depends on course conditions and personal preference.

So-called dedicated mowers (large tractors used solely to cut turf) give maximum productivity. They are best suited for courses with wide, open roughs and few trees. Dedicated mowers deliver a clean cut in roughs, and not just to the turf. According to Della Bianca, small branches, leaves, pine cones and other debris that tend to clutter up roughs disappear under the rotary's blades.

"You can run over that stuff, grind it right up, shoot it out the discharge and leave no traces of it at all. It gives a clean cut," he says.

For productivity with maneuverability, use a riding rotary mower with a front-mounted deck. A 72-inch cutting width is the most popular, but decks from 44- to 88-inches wide are available.

When choosing a cutting deck, consider your site's contours and landscaping features. If the area has distinct undulations, a larger deck's greater productivity will be negated by its ina-

bility to follow contours.

"At one time, we had a 72-inch deck that was too big for most of the areas we were using it in," says Tom Alex, superintendent at Grand Cypress Golf Club in Orlando, Fla. "We went down to a 60-inch deck and many of our scalping problems went away. If your gauge wheels are set okay and you've got the right deck for the area, scalping usually isn't a problem."

If you plan to use the mower in tight spots, make sure the cutting deck is small enough. If the machine *just fits*, you are depending on the operator to slow down and move through certain areas exactly correctly. In the real world, you are probably asking for several collisions that may damage both the machine and the landscape, not to mention the operator.

Rear-wheel and power steering make riding rotaries highly maneuverable. Look into 4-wheel drive if your course has hilly terrain.

Flexibility is another riding rotary advantage. It will probably mow most of the time, but attachments are available to blow leaves and clippings, throw snow, sweep with a rotary brush and accomplish a number of other jobs.

Labor-intensive walk-behind rotary mowers are less prevalent at golf courses, but they do have their place. Butler National uses 36-inch rotaries on some greens' banks.

Small walk-behind rotaries are in use at the prestigious Sherwood Country Club in Thousand Oaks, Calif., where the clientele includes former President Ronald Reagan, major sports celebrities, leaders of major corporations and

stars of the motion picture industry. There is pressure on superintendent Rich Wagner to provide exceptional conditions, right down to the last clipping.

"We're using commercial walk-behind rotary mowers for trim work and walk-behinds with bags for our primary roughs around the greens," Wagner says. "It's extremely labor intensive, but our players expect first-class conditions. They don't want any grass lying around the greens. In fact, they don't want any grass lying around the golf course."

Wagner says he has 10 rotaries cutting about 5 acres of low spots and tee complexes three times a week. The job usually takes all day.

Rotaries require training

"Like any piece of equipment, the operator has to know how to use it," says Milburn Country Club's Don Cook. "Once they get used to it, they're usually very good at it."

Use your experienced workers to train new operators. Have them explain how to avoid scalping and which parts of the course are off limits to rotaries. Your trainers should know how to explain the steps involved in providing the finished look you want.

"There's definitely an operator technique to it," says Butler National's Mike Sauls about using a rotary. "We've got three fellows who have been doing the rotary mowing for about 8 years now. We usually have one of them work closely with a new person the first couple of times. We explain what we're trying to accomplish and what look we want. We like a little striping around the banks, but we don't want grass in the bunkers around the greens. We explain the aesthetic appearance we're looking for."

At Muirfield Village Golf Club in Dublin, Ohio, new operator training involves more than learning the course. Superintendent Mike McBride wants new people also to understand the machines they'll be using.

"Everyone goes through a training course where a supervisor, a foreman, the service manager or a combination of the three, will go through a machine thoroughly," McBride says. "We do not only show them how it operates, but also the daily maintenance they have to do before they take it out, and what

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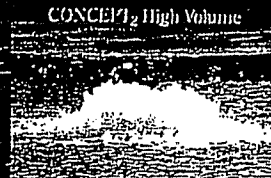
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Rotaries on golf courses

(Continued from page 60)

they do with it when they bring it back in. We also show them the limitations of that machine—where they can go, where they can't go—so they don't get in trouble, mainly from a safety point of view."

McBride says the training process usually takes a couple of days

Maintenance ease

With 400 acres of prime Florida real estate to tend, Grand Cypress's Tom Alex and his crew know the importance of good equipment maintenance. Two out-front rotary mowers cut 30 to 40 of those acres. They are in use up to 4 days a week.

"Each time they're used, our mechanics will go through and perform any daily maintenance that's needed," Alex says. "That includes greasing, checking the spindles and then sharpening the blades."

That kind of daily maintenance is essential for a machine to deliver peak performance and long service life. John Oldenburg, service manager for Jacob-

sen Textron, recommends checking the equipment's vital fluids daily.

"The engine oil and hydraulic fluid should be checked and the cutting deck greased, without fail, every day," Oldenburg says. "The deck should be cleaned daily and the radiator should be checked every day to make sure it's clear. Rotaries blow more dry debris into the air than reels. Debris can get into the engine compartment and clog things. That will reduce its efficiency, and could eventually cause overheating."

Oldenburg recommends using an air hose to clean radiators and cooling fins. He says cleaning with water can pack dust and dirt into openings between fins and clog them.

In addition to cleaning and greasing decks daily, sharpen blades regularly and maintain proper balance. Simple, inexpensive devices are available to check blade balance. An unbalanced blade can cause vibration that may contribute to premature bearing failure and structural damage.

Examine mechanical decks for loose

or worn belts. If your machine has hydraulic decks, regularly check hoses and fittings for wear or leakage. A worn, damaged or leaking component is a warning signal that a more serious problem is in the making. Address these warning signals immediately before a more serious problem occurs that could damage the turf or put the equipment out of commission.

Assign one person to do these preventive maintenance chores. Along with daily checks, make that person responsible for keeping track of oil, fluid and filter changes.

The responsibility for keeping equipment running properly doesn't have to rest solely on the mechanic's shoulders, Oldenburg says. Operators can help by reporting any machine problems. They should start even before the operator climbs aboard in the morning.

"A quick visual inspection of the machine every morning before it goes out can save a lot of headaches," Oldenburg says.

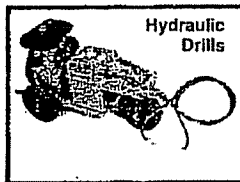
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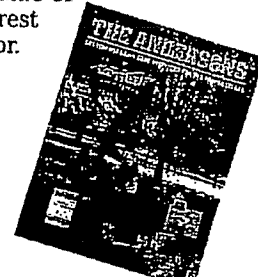
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